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EPA tests show asbestos is exposed at Ironhorse Park

By Bob Jeltsch

The federal Environmental Protection Agency has found asbestos in surface soil samples taken at the Johns-Manville asbestos landfill site at Iron Horse Park.

According to Richard Leighton, project manager for the Superfund cleanup project at the North Billerica industrial park, the asbestos was found in about 20 of the 53 samples taken.

Leighton said the samples were not taken at random, but were suspected to contain asbestos.

He said the federal Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia is currently studying the data to determine if an immediate public health threat exists.

The results of the tests on the asbestos samples were the first to come back from EPA Laboratories, Leighton said.

Manville Manager of Public relations Cliff Bowers declined to

comment on the reports, because the firm had not received notification from the EPA.

However, Sharon Checraliah, chairwoman of the local Superfund Action Committee (SAC) said she would like to see the uncovered areas patched immediately, and a two-foot clay cover put over the entire area by summer. The landfill, which is no longer in use, was covered by six inches of soil.

"That's why it keeps eroding," she said. "If there is serious erosion then asbestos can become airborne, and a lot of people live within a mile," of the site.

"I'd like to see whatever has been eroded away capped immediately, but I don't think it's necessary to put two feet of clay cover tomorrow."

Leighton said the presence of the asbestos in the samples "indicate it [the landfill] is not cov

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